



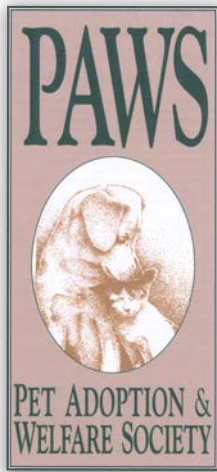
**The Need Is Great
The Time is Now**



Current Pet Adoption Center



Proposed Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center



Shelter Replacement Study Committee



The Pet Adoption and Welfare Society seeks the participation of the Burlington City Council, the Alamance County Commissioners and the cities of Elon, Graham and Mebane in a study committee to determine (1) the needs, (2) the cost and (3) the funding recommendations for the replacement of the current animal shelter. The committee will also include additional members involved in the operation and funding of the current shelter and adoption center.

NOTE:

This is the survey that was done by the previous public/private study committee that was formed to determine ways to reduce euthanasia and increase adoptions. It resulted in the building of the Pet Adoption Center and later our spay/neuter clinic.

This survey reflects the strong support that is present in Alamance County for the welfare of companion animals and is included as evidence of that. (Probably more so today.)

Pet Adoption and Welfare Society Survey

September 5 - 7, 2001

Survey Design and Methodology

*Telephone survey
administered
September 5-7, 2001
among adults in
Alamance County.*

*Margin of error of
 $\pm 5.5\%$ at the 95%
level of confidence.*

The findings of this survey are the result of 322 telephone interviews conducted on September 5, 6, and 7, 2001 among a randomly selected sample of the adult population in Alamance County, North Carolina. Using a telephone dialing technique known as random digit dialing, where calls are placed to random working telephone numbers, interviews were completed between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

After the initial telephone call was placed, an additional *within household selection process* was carried out to randomly select a person within the household to be interviewed. If the randomly selected person within the household was not available to be interviewed, a callback was scheduled at a time the person would be able to take the call. Up to three callbacks were placed before eliminating the number from the sample.

The average length of the interview was twelve minutes. The resulting response rate for the study was 34%.

The survey yielded 322 completed telephone interviews. For samples of this size, the margin of error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 5.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 similar samples, the results would differ by no more than 5.5 percentage points from what would have been obtained had all adults in Alamance County taken part in the survey.

At the completion of each interview, the survey data was reviewed for completeness and consistency, and data was transferred to statistical software for analysis. Data analysis consisted of a descriptive analysis for all survey items.

The survey was conducted by Accurus Research Systems, a nationally recognized market and public opinion research company located in Burlington, North Carolina. Accurus Research was responsible for the overall design of the research project, sample selection, questionnaire development, and processing and analyzing the survey data. Telephone interviews were completed by the R.T. Nielson Company under the direction of Accurus Research Systems.

Survey Summary

About two-thirds of the survey respondents own a pet.

Seven out of ten pet owners consider their pet to be a member of the family.

Overall, the results of this survey indicate that residents of Alamance County share a concern for the proper treatment and well-being of animals. Whether an animal has a loving home or whether the animal is unfortunate in that it does not have a suitable living environment, the public believes that animals deserve to be treated and cared for in a humane manner. They also believe that public leaders have a role to play in the issue of animal welfare.

Pet Ownership

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents taking part in the survey (64%) currently own a pet. About four out of ten pet owners tell us they have a dog, while one-quarter are cat owners. Most of the households surveyed that own pets have one or two animals at this time.

Own a Pet?

Yes	64%
No	36%

Among the households surveyed that do not own a pet, the reasons for non-pet ownership are nearly equally mixed between those who do not want to own a pet (47%) and those who would like to but their current circumstances do not allow for pet ownership (53%).

The findings of this study clearly suggest that there is a strong emotional bond between members of a household and their pets. Seventy-one percent of the households owning a pet consider the pet to be "a member of the family."

Families and Their Pets

A member of the family	71%
Somewhere in the middle	20%
Just a pet	9%

Another indication of the emotional linkage between people and their pets is the proportion of pets who live inside their master's home. One-third of the households with a dog (34%) and 40% of homes with a cat indicate that the pet lives inside exclusively. Thirty-seven percent of households with dogs and 43% that have cats say their pets spend time both inside and outside the house.

Where Pets Live

	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Cats</u>	<u>Other Pets</u>
Inside	34%	40%	52%
Outside	29%	17%	28%
Combination	37%	43%	20%

Well-Being of Pets

The discussion to this point has focused on pets who have a home. Much of the survey's intent was to measure the attitudes of the public with respect to animals who are mistreated, lost, or without a home. Data from area animal shelters shows that more than 5,000 dogs and cats came to the Alamance County shelter last year. Of these animals, 415 were returned to their owners and 194 were adopted. The balance, or about 88%, had to be euthanized. In contrast, more than one-half of the animals that came to the Guilford County shelter last year were adopted.

Seventy-five percent of survey respondents were not aware that a substantial number of pets are put to sleep before they can be adopted.

When given this information, fully three-quarters of the survey respondents (75%) say they were not aware that Alamance County adopts out such a small number of pets and, consequently, has to destroy so many. Moreover, 80% think local city and county officials should do whatever is necessary to increase the number of pets being adopted and reduce the rate at which animals are being destroyed, similar to what is being experienced in Guilford County. Taken a step further, 88% of the survey respondents feel *somewhat* or *very* strongly that local officials should be doing more to increase the pet adoption rate.

Pet Adoption

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Aware of low adoption/ high destroy rate?	22%	75%
Should public officials work to change these numbers?	80%	7%

Nine out of ten respondents think Alamance County should have a shelter large enough to handle the needs of a county its size.

Several reasons exist that help explain why Alamance County is forced to destroy so many animals. One reason is that the local shelter is able to house only 125 dogs and cats at any given time. In addition, the county has a 21-day quarantine policy that must be observed before a pet becomes eligible for adoption, something no other jurisdiction in the state has. Add to this the fact that the shelter is required to hold the animal for only three days, and the result is that a strong majority of dogs and cats are destroyed before they have a chance to be adopted.

Eighty-nine percent of the sample agree that Alamance County should have an animal shelter large enough to handle the needs of a county its size. Eighty-two percent agree that the county shelter should change its 21-day quarantine policy and its 3-day holding requirement so that more pets will have an opportunity to find a home. A larger proportion of respondents (92%) favors a strong volunteer program as part of a proactive adoption program at the Alamance County animal shelter, and 88% agree that Alamance County should have a proactive adoption program that includes a pet adoption center.

Reducing Number of Pets Destroyed

More respondents favor enforcing current animal cruelty laws over newer and tougher laws.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
County should have a shelter large enough to meet its needs.	89%	6%
County should change 21-day quarantine/3-day hold policies.	82%	6%
County should have a strong volunteer program as part of a proactive adoption program.	92%	3%
County should have a proactive adoption program that includes a pet adoption center.	88%	5%

Potential Solutions

Any number of solutions can be explored for helping to minimize the level of mistreatment inflicted upon animals as well as controlling their population. Several were tested in this study. Sixty-two percent of the sample say that enforcement of current laws and the subsequent prosecution of offenders is a better way to protect pets rather than writing stronger and tougher ordinances beyond those that are currently on the books (24%).

More Effective in Protecting Pets:

Enforcement of current laws	62%
Stronger and tougher laws	24%
Not sure	14%

About one-half of the respondents agree with an ordinance that would prohibit keeping pets tied to a chain, and a similar proportion would support a licensing fee for each pet they own.

A clear preference does not emerge concerning ways to control the pet population. The largest segment of respondents (34%) believes that a mandatory spay/neutering policy for pets not licensed to breed is the most effective means for controlling the population of pets. Twenty-nine percent say spay/neutering should be at the discretion of the pet owner and, thus, voluntary, while 27% prefer that non-profit agencies and governmental organizations subsidize spay/neuter programs. Nine percent of the sample remains undecided.

Alamance County residents are not especially enthusiastic about two measures tested. Fewer than one-half (48%) either *somewhat* or *strongly* agree that there should be an ordinance that prohibits keeping a pet tied to a chain. Fifty-three percent are *somewhat* or *strongly* in agreement that pet owners in the county should pay an annual fee of between \$3 and \$5 for each pet they own.

According to the survey respondents, some of the responsibility for ensuring the welfare of animals falls on the shoulders of elected officials,

making public leaders a key player in finding solutions to animal welfare issues. Two-thirds of the survey panel (64%) are **more likely** to vote for a public official who works to improve the adoption rate of pets. Three out of four (76%) are **more likely** to support public officials who are committed to improving the condition of pets held at animal shelters.

Respondents are more likely to vote for public officials who support animal welfare issues.

Support of Public Officials

	More likely to support	Less likely to support	Would make no difference	Not sure
A public official who works to improve the adoption rate of pets.	64%	3%	28%	5%
A public official who is committed to improving the condition of pets held at animal shelters.	76%	3%	17%	4%

Other Findings

Nearly one-half of the survey participants (48%) say they have visited the Alamance County animal shelter, and 38% have visited another animal shelter. Among respondents who have never been to a shelter, 37% tell us they would visit one if they were looking to adopt a pet. Thirteen percent would go to a shelter if their pet were missing.

More than half of the survey respondents are not familiar with the work of the Alamance County Humane Society.

Much of the survey panel is not particularly familiar with the work carried out by the Alamance County Humane Society. More than one-half of the survey respondents (52%) do not know enough about the Humane Society's mission to be able to provide a rating. Thirty-nine percent have a favorable impression of the work done by this group, while 10% hold an unfavorable impression. Still, 93% of the survey respondents agree that the Alamance County animal shelter should work more closely with volunteers of the Humane Society to improve the well-being of animals.

Closer Working Relationship Between Animal Shelter and Humane Society

Agree	93%
Disagree	1%
Not sure	6%

Demographics

The study resulted in demographics that are consistent with census data in Alamance County for gender, region, age and income. Slight oversampling resulted for race among whites and for education among college graduates.

**Help us get
a new shelter**



**Shelter Replacement Study Committee
Meeting Soon**